

7 Bald Hill/Stetson Shipyard

Visible from the river only, currently under the Route 3 bridge. Although no plaque marks the spot, this is the site of an early Native American campground, and later the Stetson Shipyard.

8 Fox Hill Yard (1690-1869)

Accessible via Brigantine Circle, parking available on the road. At the Brigantine Circle Park, follow the path on the left down to the river; a plaque marks the spot. The Barstow and Waterman families built ships here, including the whaleship *Hilo*, 390 tons, which was the largest vessel built at this yard.

9 Hanover Yards (1668-1844)

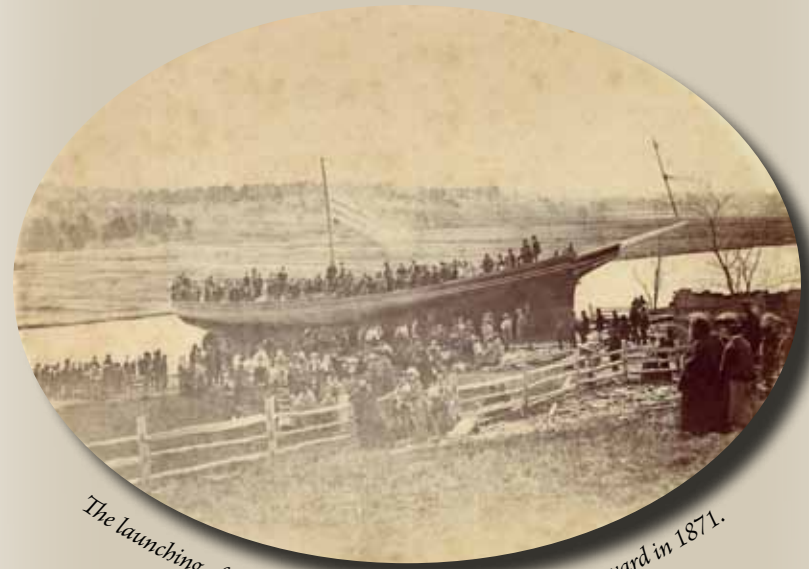
Accessible via the Old Washington Street Bridge in Hanover, parking available on the road.

Follow the paths down to the river and 2 plaques mark the spot from which eleven shipyards could be seen, with vessels in various stages of construction, during the peak years of shipbuilding activity.



Many of the North River shipyards have plaques visible from the river.

Shipyards of the North River



The launching of the Helen M. Foster at Chittenden Shipyard in 1871.



In 1796, the whaleship *Essex* was built in the North River—its exact location is unknown. (According to Briggs, many ships were registered as being built on the North River, but it is impossible to ascertain at which yards they were built.) The story of the *Essex* is renowned for being the basis of the novel *Moby Dick*. In 1819, the *Essex* left Nantucket with 20 crew members aboard. In the middle of the South Pacific, the ship was rammed and sunk by an angry sperm whale. The crew drifted for more than 90 days in three

tiny whaleboats, succumbing to weather, hunger, disease, and ultimately turning to drastic measures in the fight for survival. The story is also depicted in the book *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* by Nathaniel Philbrick.

Much of the information in this pamphlet comes from L. Vernon Briggs' *History of Shipbuilding on the North River*, originally published in 1889.

This book is available for purchase through the Society at
WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

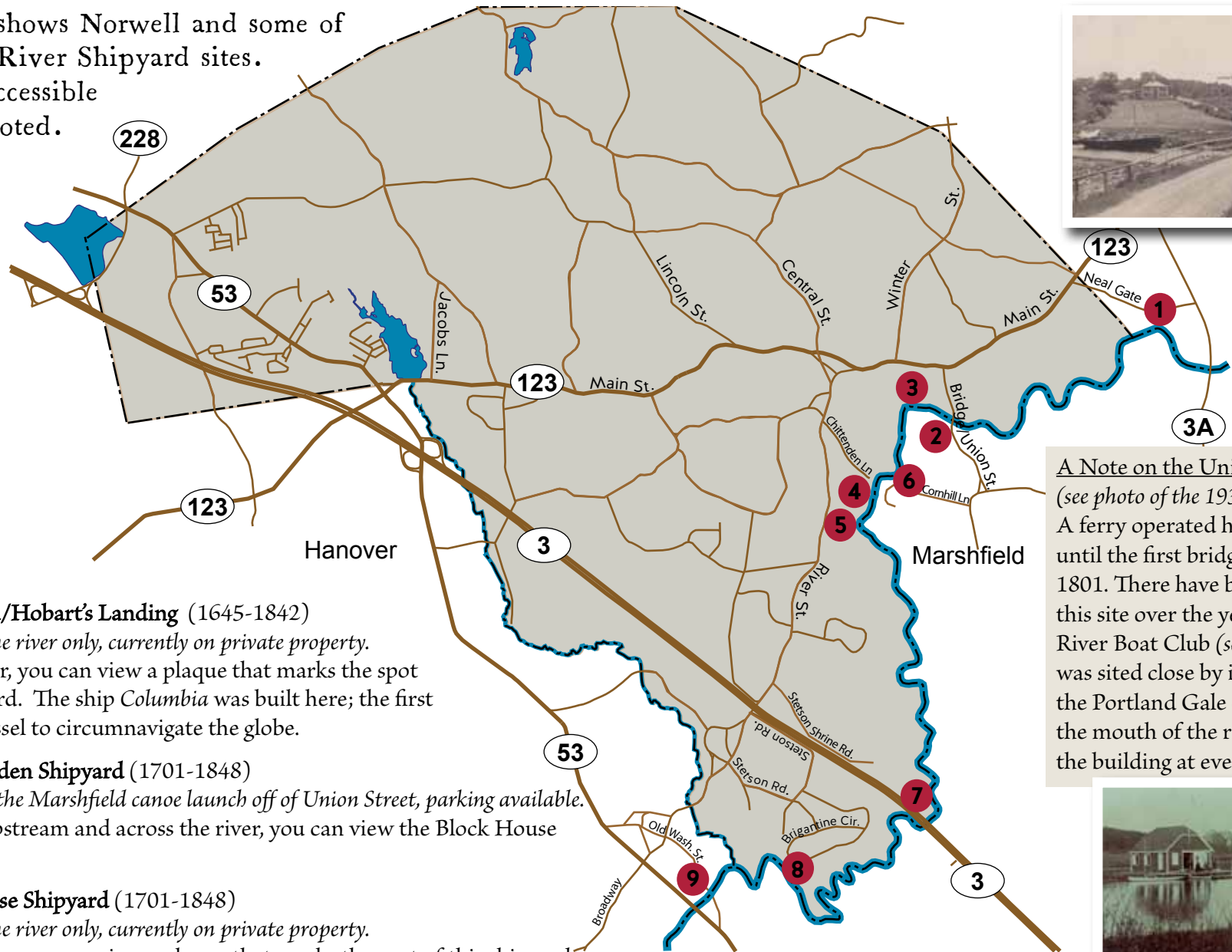
A *River Recreation Guide* which lists more shipyard sites on the North River is available for purchase through the NSRWA at WWW.NSRWA.ORG



Produced by the
Norwell Historical Society
in conjunction with the
North & South River
Watershed Association



This map shows Norwell and some of the North River Shipyard sites. Publicly accessible areas are noted.



A Note on the Union Street Bridge
(see photo of the 1930's bridge above)
A ferry operated here as early as 1644 until the first bridge was built circa 1801. There have been 5 bridges on this site over the years. The North River Boat Club (see photo below) was sited close by in the 1890's until the Portland Gale of 1898 changed the mouth of the river and flooded the building at every high tide.



1 Briggs Yard/Hobart's Landing (1645-1842)

Visible from the river only, currently on private property. From the river, you can view a plaque that marks the spot of this shipyard. The ship *Columbia* was built here; the first American vessel to circumnavigate the globe.

2 Brooks Tilden Shipyard (1701-1848)

Accessible via the Marshfield canoe launch off of Union Street, parking available. If you look upstream and across the river, you can view the Block House Shipyard.

3 Block House Shipyard (1701-1848)

Visible from the river only, currently on private property. From the river, you can view a plaque that marks the spot of this shipyard. This bend in the river was the site of an old block-house or garrison for the safety of settlers during King Phillips War (1676).

4 Chittenden Shipyard (1690-1871)

Accessible via Chittenden Lane and the town canoe launch, parking available. A plaque marks the spot. The last ship built on the North River, the *Helen M. Foster*, was launched from here in 1871 (see photo on cover). The shipyard's saw pit is still visible.

5 Curtis-Wanton Yards (1670-1840)

Visible from the river only, currently on private property. From the river, you can view a plaque that marks the spot of these shipyards, which were divided by a stone wall.

6 Rogers Shipyard (1790-1819)

Accessible via Cornhill Lane (off of Union Street in Marshfield), parking available. A plaque marks the location of this shipyard that built *Pacific Trader*, the only snow-rigged vessel of record built on the North River. (continued on back)